

STEVEN AND HIS
SECRET GARDEN
- P3

Meet the resident who has been tending a hidden estate garden for nearly 30 years – but now wants community help



OBAMA 'MOVED' BY GIFT FROM ARTIST - P5

A young Hackney artist received personal letter of thanks from the US President after sending him a painting of a 'billion dollar' bill

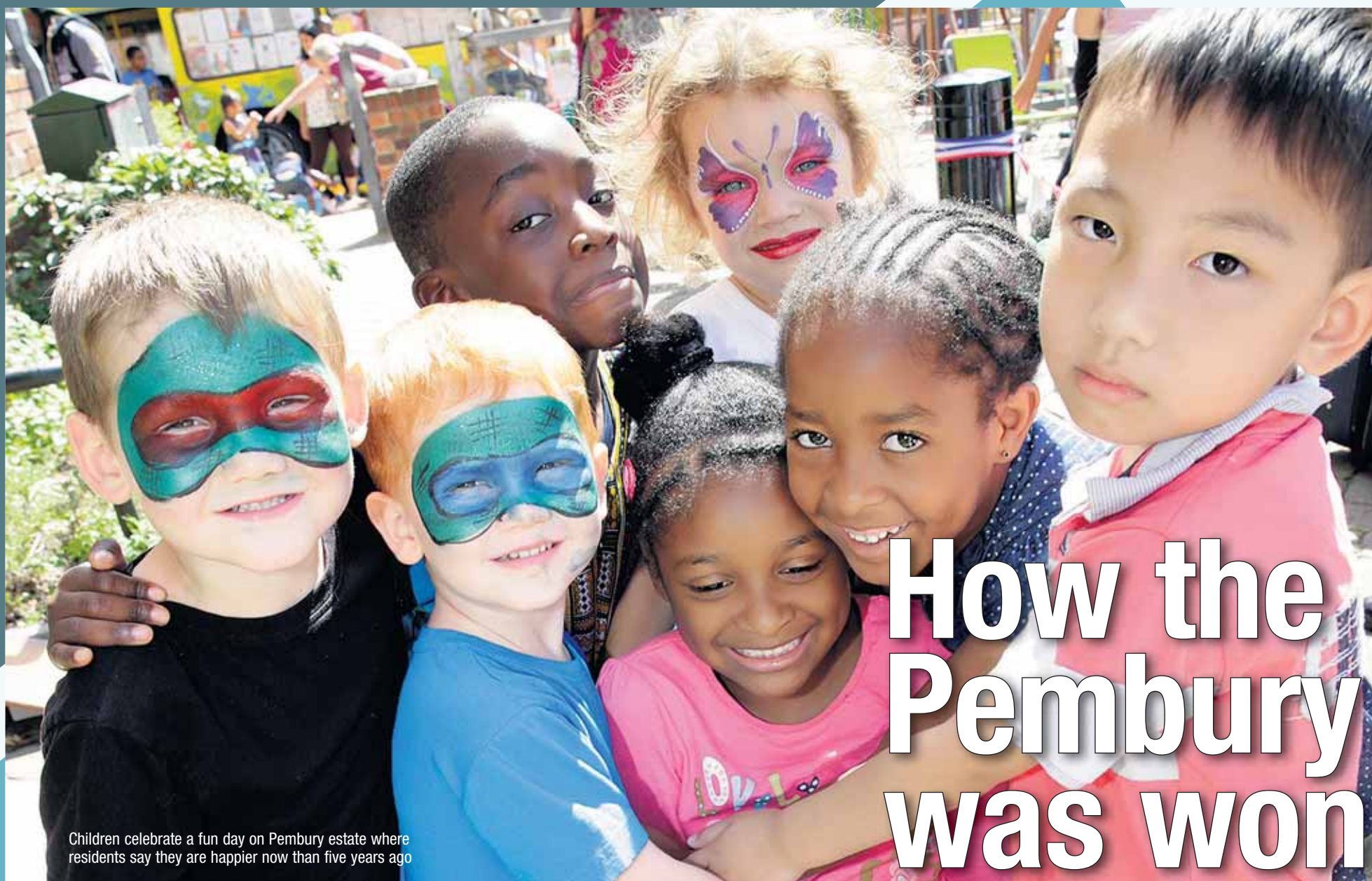


GET CHILDREN ON ESTATES OUT PLAYING TOGETHER - P6

Learn how to make the most of the free space on your estate by setting up play sessions for youngsters – and bring residents of all ages closer

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Working for better homes

ourhomes



Children celebrate a fun day on Pembury estate where residents say they are happier now than five years ago

How the Pembury was won

WHAT does Dolly Parton, Harlem in New York, and Barack Obama have to do with Hackney? Incredibly, they've all played a part in shaping the future of Pembury estate.

Back in the day, rightly or wrongly, the

Pembury, in E5, was synonymous with many things, few of them positive. However, by the mid-noughties, years of hard work and investment by the community, estate owners Peabody and the Council were paying off.

Then, in 2011, the Pembury was back in the headlines again, and once more it was for all the wrong reasons: the estate, built mainly

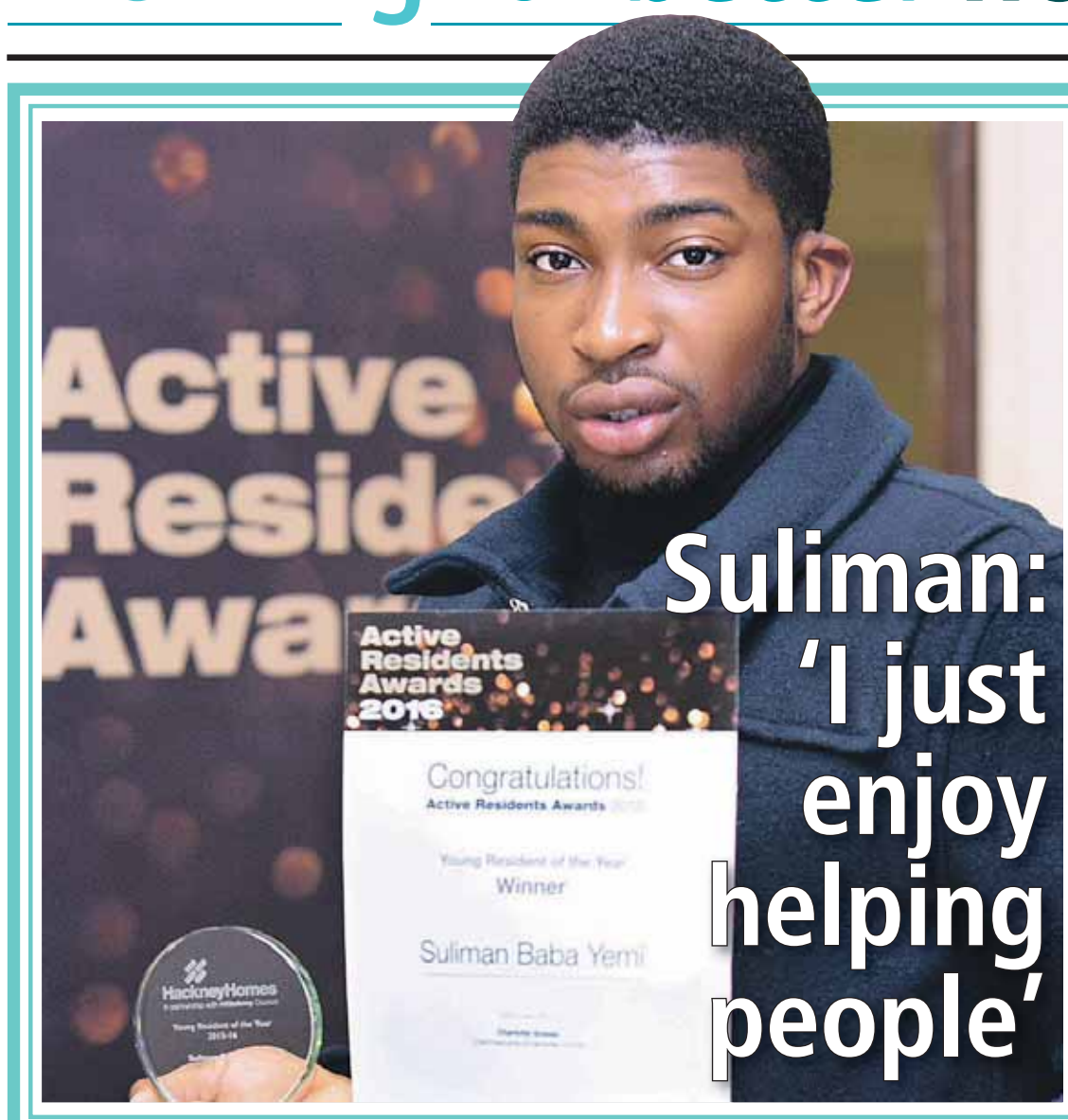
between the '30s and '60s and home to more than 1,000 households, had become unfairly named in the London riots; those notorious, summer days of disorder sparked by the controversial police killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham and which spread, quick-fire, into neighbouring boroughs and eventually across the country.

Here, the flashpoints were in fact mainly outside Pembury estate but nevertheless, its reputation had once again been damaged and its community was in shock.

So, when the dust finally settled and shock turned to contemplation, it was agreed that focus and action was again needed.

See p4 for full story

Working for better homes



**Suliman:
'I just
enjoy
helping
people'**

Suliman Baba-Yemi, 19, was awarded for his work in the community, including coaching children in football

AMBITIOUS student Suliman Baba-Yemi is committed to helping people not only on the estate where he lives, but across the borough.

Since 2014, the 19-year-old has given up his free time to be a part of the Youth Active Residents Group.

He takes part in meetings, helps out at events, undertakes charity work with the group, and is willing to do 'whatever's asked' to help his local community. He said: "I just enjoy helping people."

The Youth Active Residents Group is made up of young people, aged between 15 and 25, who live in Council homes and estates.

The group is used to consult young residents on issues in connection with housing, and build ways for young residents in all areas of Hackney to have their opinions represented directly within the housing service.

Suliman's dedication to others has been recognised by the Council, which named him Young Resident of the Year, at the housing service's Active Residents Awards in May.

Shanaz Begum Ali, from Empowered, which specialises in working with housing associations to support their young residents, nominated Suliman.

She told organisers that 'although he's not been with the group for very long, he's completely embraced the project and is always available to volunteer his time towards project milestones and support his fellow peers in any way he can'.

The glowing nomination from Shanaz continued: "Suliman is a very committed and motivated young

resident, he is always thinking of ways that the group can empower young residents and encourage them to work towards community cohesion.

"He is willing to volunteer his time to help other members of the group and members of the community. He has great leadership skills and is happy to attend events and meetings on his own."

Suliman has lived on Nightingale estate, between Clapton and Stoke Newington, for his whole life.

Praising Hackney as a place to live and grow up, he said: "I like the fact that it's multicultural. There is a good sense of community."

Hackney's strong community spirit is because of people like Suliman, and the other winners of the Active Residents Awards.

His favourite project has been coaching children in football at Hindle House, a Council block in Dalston. He was the assistant coach for up to 10 children, leading them through training and football games.

Suliman found time to be involved in the youth group despite studying hard at college. Having recently left Sir George Monoux College, in Walthamstow, with a BTEC level 3 in business, Suliman is heading to the University of Essex to study economics and finance.

If you would like to help your community, as Suliman has, there are many ways you can get involved, from joining a local tenant and resident association, to volunteering for a park.

For more info on how to give time to your local community, visit: www.hackney.gov.uk/getinvolved; or call: 020 8356 7845.

Fun in Tower Gardens

MORE than 100 residents came together to celebrate community spirit at Tower Gardens annual fun day.

There was lots on offer at the event on 23 July, including face-painting, giant Jenga, a bouncy castle and inflatable sumo wrestling.

The Speaker of Hackney, Cllr Rosemary Sales, was also on hand to announce the winners of a raffle.

She got involved with the festivities, getting a henna tattoo from one of the stalls. It was the eighth time the E5 event had taken place and it was organised by the tenant resident association (TRA) with help from the Council's Resident Participation Team.

Staff set up information stalls to give residents tips on recycling, advertise Hackney's fostering scheme, and answer questions on housing services and neighbourhood safety.

Victoria Ndunagum, Secretary of the Tower Gardens estate TRA, helped organise the event.

She said: "It was a really fulfilling day. There were people there of all ages and all walks of life and the whole community came together. "Everyone was really happy and a lot of people came. Some people who wouldn't normally come out of their house to say hello came along, and everyone was talking to each other, meeting their neighbours and getting to know each other.

"It was a really successful day, we will be doing it again next year."



Youngsters enjoy playing in sumo suits at the Tower Gardens fun day

A great place to grow

AN 'edible garden' and inviting green space is now open at the New Kingshold estate community centre, near Hackney Central.

The previously under-used square called Primrose Garden was transformed with the help of residents and volunteers from Cordwainers Grow, a community group, and features beds growing a mix of salads and herbs, which will be harvested and eaten by local people.

The garden also includes flowering plants, which will increase biodiversity



and encourage visits from bees and butterflies. Local charities such as The Stroke Project, as well as community groups, are also taking advantage of the new garden, enjoying all the therapeutic benefits gardening and engaging with nature brings.

Working for better homes



Jack-of-all-trades Steven has been looking after the pensioners' plot for 30 years

I can't do it all by myself anymore – I'd be glad of any help I can get



CARPENTER, gardener, groundsman and naturalist. Steven Harvey may be a Jack-of-all-trades when it comes to the community garden he tends but it's time, he's decided, to ask for some help.

The 75-year-old has been near single-handedly responsible for the pensioners' garden in Boscobel House estate, for nearly 30 years, during which time he has designed and built a greenhouse and trellis arch; planted, tended and nurtured dozens of varieties of flowers and shrubs; maintained the garden furniture; and positioned himself as gatekeeper and guardian of this oasis of

calm for residents amid the hubbub of Hackney Central.

"It's non-stop," he admits. Adding: "Once you think you're finished with one project, something else needs tending to. I can't do it all by myself anymore, it gets too much for me. I want to get the garden nice and I want people to come in and enjoy it."

The Council helps the pensioner by cutting back trees when he requests it, and it also funds flowers, plants and equipment, but Steven feels the garden should be looked-after by the whole community.

"I would like people with [at least] medium experience, one or two people who can do things

on their own. However, I'd be glad of any help I can get," he said.

The garden is a shady, pretty, secret gem at the back of the Boscobel blocks, adjoining Wilton Way, which you'd easily miss if you didn't know it was there. It's home to flowers as diverse

as peonies, Canterbury bells, American lilac, roses, buddleia, and visited by grateful, wandering wildlife, including robins, jays, blackbirds, bees, and occasionally, damselflies and dragonflies.

The garden was originally designed and laid out by the Free-Form arts group in

1986, specifically to cater for pensioners in the two blocks, and to complement the children's playground and garden nearby.

From the day he started, the plot became a pet project of Steven's, whose love and knowledge of nature can be traced back to his childhood in East Anglia, and later honed by the famous horticulturist, Peter Seabrook, in the 1960s.

Steven explains: "I was a shopkeeper for Cramphorns, a nursery company. We were taught by [Seabrook] how to string together the Latin names of flowers and plants, and were trained so we could advise people who came into the garden stores."

For Steven, the garden is both a labour of love and a

therapeutic outlet.

"I've suffered depression and being out in the garden takes my mind off things. I'm out here most days, weather-permitting.

"I like to see young things growing; I like to see the fresh buds, it's a sign something is growing, of new life and the future," he said.

If you would like to volunteer to help Steven, he can be contacted on:

020 7275 9433.

If you are a tenant aged 65, or older, or if you are registered disabled, you may be able to get help or advice on maintaining trees in your garden.

E-mail: neighbourhood@hackney.gov.uk; call: **020 8356 3330.**



Working for better homes



Residents happier now than five years ago

TODAY Peabody estate residents are – by their own admission – happier and more positive – with nearly 75 per cent of those surveyed agreeing that in the five years since the riots, the estate had ‘got better’. While, 85 per cent of people confirmed they felt ‘positive’, or ‘very positive’ about living there.

But what’s changed? In 2013, long-standing employment and youth work initiatives on the estate were strengthened, new pilot projects started and local partnerships built.

This led to the formal launch last year of the Children’s Community programme. It’s based on a ‘cradle to career’ model – so-called

because it offers a continuum of support for youngsters into adulthood – that was conceived in Harlem, one of Manhattan’s poorest neighbourhoods, and a scheme strongly backed by President Obama.

In Peabury estate, housing association Peabody has been working with the Council and charity Save the Children on their own hugely ambitious 10-year version, based partly on the successes in Harlem. The vision is no small one: to directly improve the lives

of the estate’s 900 children.

The method is three-pronged, focussing on early years and primary school; secondary school and transition to adulthood; and support for parents. And it is honed by what residents on the estate say they need most.

So far, this has ranged from childcare support; family literacy projects; homework clubs; one-to-one support into employment and training for young people; an estate-based employment service for older residents; and much more.

It’s an approach that Tim Shields, the Council’s Chief Executive, described as ‘helping children, young people and families on Peabury to gain skills, grow in confidence and get the best out of life’.

Success stories are already starting to emerge a year on. Emmanuel, a single father who had been unemployed for more than 10 years, was struggling when the team helped him to apply for a hardship fund, supported him to begin clearing his rent arrears, and helped him find work.

“The adviser has been the only person who has helped me since I’ve had custody of my son six years ago. The team helped me find work so I am financially better off; I also now know what I am entitled to. Me and my son are both happier, our lives are better, I’ve got a job right on my doorstep that I love and I’m not sitting at home depressed anymore,” Emmanuel said.

Stephen Howlett, Peabody Chief Executive, said the housing association had also been ‘investing heavily’ at Peabury with the completion of more than 260 new homes and a new community centre.

But what’s this all got to do with ‘9 to 5’ singer Dolly? Her charity, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, sends a free book a month to nearly 160 under-fives on the estate. That’s certainly another thing to sing about.

To find out more about the programme go to: peabody.org.uk/our-neighbourhoods/whats-on-at-peabury



Are you eligible for 15 hours of free childcare?

DID you know families with an income of less than £16,190, that receive benefits, or have a child with certain disabilities, or in local authority care, can get 15 hours of free childcare for a two-year-old each week?

The free childcare can help your child become more confident, play with other children, develop their language skills and learn new things.

Fifteen hours a week could allow some time for you, time to work, or time to go on a course.

Amelia Richards, whose son attends Little Yum Yums Nursery, at St Mark’s Church,

Colveston Crescent, in Dalston, said: “The 15 hours free nursery care has helped my son immensely to develop his social skills and speech, amongst other things.

“It gives him an opportunity that he wouldn’t normally have to socialise with children from different backgrounds and take part in fun activities and play sessions on a regular basis.”

To find out more and to apply, visit:

learningtrust.co.uk/free. You will need your National Insurance number, date of birth and other personal information.



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**SPOT
LIGHT**



Artist astounded by letter of thanks from President of US

BARACK Obama has sent a personal letter of praise to a young Homerton artist who gave the US President a gift of a large canvas painting depicting him on a 'billion dollar' bill.

Kevin Gill, 20, initially wrote to former Prime Minister David Cameron asking him to pass on his 4ft x 2ft oil canvass – which took a year to paint and which represents progression, freedom and history – to Obama during a presidential visit in April.

However, Kevin was told this was not possible and advised instead to contact the US embassy in London. A few days later Kevin – and his canvas – were summoned to a hotel close to the embassy, where one of Obama's personal staff told him the President would be interested in the artwork.

Kevin, who lives in Staveley Close in Jack Dunning estate, said: "She told me they liked it, that [President Obama] didn't know about it yet, but she was sure it would make a great gift."

After a nervous four-month wait, Kevin, who went to the Urswick School, was awoken one morning by his mum, holding an envelope from the White House.

In it, was a signed letter from Obama, who said he was 'moved by [Kevin's] generosity'. The President added: "Though we all come from different traditions and communities, I believe nations and individuals are stronger when they work together."

"I was pretty excited," said Kevin. Adding: "But more so, I was relieved that he had received it, liked it, and had got the message. It was strange to think he took the time to write to me, a kid from Hackney."

Kevin, who is being championed by Hackney street artist, Stik, is now working on a piece of art representing Barbadian freedom for the island's Independence Day in November.



Shared-ownership homes in largest timber building

The world's largest cross laminated timber building (CLT), being built in Dalston Lane, reached its peak this summer.

The building is now at its tallest point, a milestone in construction, which was celebrated this month with a 'topping out' ceremony attended by Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Philip Glanville.

This record-breaking building is also a greener alternative to traditional construction. The Dalston Lane project is calculated to save 2,400 tonnes of carbon compared to a traditionally built block.

Cllr Glanville said: "We need to build more homes in Hackney and this development with its use of timber construction joins a number of other timber buildings in the area, making us a world leader for timber construction. By using CLT, developers can speed up construction, make it more sustainable and less disruptive to the local community, and leading to the building of more badly needed high-quality homes on sites like this in Dalston."

The Dalston Lane project will provide significant residential capacity with 101 homes for private rent, 15 homes for affordable rent and five for shared-ownership. The development also has over 3,460 sqm of commercial space.



Working for better homes



Start play session on your estate and bring community together

COMMUNITY spirit is alive and well in Hackney. The borough's pioneering Play Streets scheme – which enables residents to shut streets temporarily to traffic – has encouraged thousands of children to get outdoors and make the most of the space in front of their homes.

The majority of sessions take place on residential roads, but Hackney Play wants to encourage residents on estates to set up sessions as well, or organise play events in parks. The benefits of children getting fresh air,

playing freely and socialising are obvious, but there are other positives: parents say Play Streets help bring communities together, lead to local activism and more neighbourliness in an ever-changing borough.

Allison Vitalis, who volunteers to organise play streets in Albion Drive, Haggerston, said: "The Play Streets sessions and street parties help to break down barriers, create opportunities and make people feel more comfortable."

Residents are encouraged to come

out into their front gardens, or the street, to meet neighbours and join in the fun. Organisers have reported that older residents especially have benefited, as they get to know more people living in the area.

Adult meet and mingle as the children play, helping break down any barriers that may have developed with such a diverse and evolving local population. There are also other benefits with residents setting-up street e-mail groups, helping elderly neighbours, and organising outings.

Grace Shore Banks, who co-organises the play street in Albion Drive, said: "The penny drops that we're all a community. I feel some responsibility for my community and the problems in it. If we can start with what's in our street, then that can make a difference."

Roding Road resident and play street organiser, Anna Shepherd, added: "I feel exhilarated and inspired to be part of something that could be a game-changer, in terms of changing the way people live together in neighbourhoods."

The Council funds Hackney Play Association to offer free help to residents who want to set up a play event. The team supports those already taking part and promotes the idea to parents across Hackney, with particular focus on helping more people in estates to get involved.

Some residents are using a different approach, coming together to play and chat in public spaces without shutting the road. Parents from Woodberry Down estate started a monthly session in July and a resident in the Suffolk estate has been doing it for more than two years. Hackney Play Association provided start-up support with play workers, a box of play equipment and help promoting the sessions.

In late July, families from Upper Clapton and Stamford Hill came together for a play streets-themed session in Springfield Park with tug-of-war, Connect 4, hula-hooping, skipping and other games for children, plus refreshments and socialising for adults.

The event was supported by the Ihsan Children's Centre and Hackney Housing, together with Hackney Play.

Play streets have undeniably been popular with residents. There are

currently 43 streets taking part. In 2014/15, 205 play street sessions took place, enabling more than 400 hours of play and neighbourly fun, involving more than 800 families.

Several primary schools and a children's centre are also taking part, running sessions after the school day ends. The Finsbury Park Homeless



Families Project recently held a session, and a church in Clapton takes part too.

Gerry Tissier, of Roding Road, helps to organise a fun day at Daubeney Fields. He said: "There's quite a big divide between people who live in the two housing estates, Clapton Park and Kingsmead, and people from outside the estates, and the boating community. The fun day helps break that down. It's about creating virtuous circles where there used to be vicious ones."

MORE INFO

I If you want to create a safer place for kids to play, meet your neighbours, and make your street or estate a more community-focused place, visit: hackneyplay.org/play-streets. Further free support is available from: playingout.net

Volunteers spruce up community garden



VOLUNTEERS from gardening charity Groundwork London got together earlier this month to brighten up the Trowbridge estate community hall garden.

The fence was painted a bright duck-egg blue and planters were arranged in the previously bare yard. The pensioners club, which uses the hall, asked for lavender, geraniums and roses to be planted to provide bright flowers and a lovely smell all summer. They can now enjoy using the outside space to soak-up the sunshine and have quiet relaxing moments.

Volunteers joined the pensioners club to have a cup of tea and toast the new garden, taking part in a celebratory game of bingo to mark the completion of the work.

Now there are unicorns in Arden

THE Arden Estate tenant managed organisation, PEER Gallery, and young people from Laburnum Boat Club joined forces to mark the influence of Shakespeare on the local area.

The mural in the playground, featuring a quote from *The Tempest* – 'Now I will believe that there are unicorns' – was painted during the 'Shakespeare in Shoreditch' festival, part-funded by Hackney Community Fund, set up by the Council. Shakespeare lived in the area, where he worked as an actor and wrote some of his most iconic plays.

Ania Bas, Local Audience Curator of PEER gallery in Hoxton, said: "We want people to be excited about the Shakespeare connection."





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400 new homes earmarked for the Nightingale estate

Architects'
drawings of
the Nightingale
estate proposals



LANDMARK plans to build 400 modern, high-quality homes to replace derelict land on a Clapton housing estate are set to be submitted by the Council as part of its ambitious regeneration programme.

The proposals for Nightingale estate would transform a two-hectare area of vacant land into a mix of homes for social rent, shared-ownership and private sale following years of detailed consultation with residents.

Marking the final stage of estate regeneration, the £200million scheme would complement more than 300 affordable homes already built by award-winning housing association Southern Housing Trust, along with nearly 400 more refurbished Council homes.

Other highlights include improvements to public spaces across the estate, with new trees, lighting and playgrounds, as well as a new community centre, café and retail space.

The project forms part of the Council's estate regeneration programme, which is one of the UK's biggest, and will see nearly 3,000 new homes on 18 estates, replacing old Council homes that are uneconomical to repair.

This unique self-funding programme will result in at least half of the new homes being available for genuinely affordable social rent and shared-ownership, with some homes for outright sale to help pay for them in the absence of any government funding.

The Council has submitted the scheme to Hackney's independent Planning Authority, with construction set to begin late next year, subject to permission being granted.

The long-term scheme saw five Council tower blocks demolished to make way for the new homes. In total, the regeneration of the estate will have delivered more than 750 new homes when complete.

New ways of working will see cleaner estates



MECHANICAL sweepers are out and about on estates to help improve the look and feel of outdoor areas, as part of a series of changes the Council is making to how estates are cleaned, in order to improve cleanliness and create a more pleasant environment.

Estates will keep dedicated cleaners and internal cleaning arrangements will remain the same for now.

However, estate cleaners are now supported by vehicles that remove litter and dirt from roads and paths, as well as specialist crews who are able to deal with problem issues, such as graffiti, fly-tipping and bulky waste.

Smaller blocks will continue to receive daily visits from a mobile cleaning team as well as support from tipper vehicles and staff.

Kim Wright, Group Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing,

said: "Hackney is well-known for having clean streets and we want to bring our estates up to the same standard.

"We've begun to make some key changes to tackling the long-standing issue of fly-tipping, which we know has been a problem on estates for years.

This next phase of work will see us introduce specific measures to deal with problems that residents have asked us to

prioritise, particularly around the frequency, completeness and standard of the services delivered."

To report fly-tipping on your estate, call: **020 8356 4504**; or e-mail: **enforcementsupport@hackney.gov.uk**

Book large waste removal for free at: **www.hackney.gov.uk/bulkywaste**; or call: **020 8356 6688**.

Report power cuts with new, free number

RESIDENTS can call a new, free phone number – 105 – to report or get information about a power cut. It will put you through to your local electricity network operator, the company that manages the cables, wires and substations that bring electricity into homes and businesses.

105 is a free service and you can call the number from most landlines and mobile phones. It doesn't matter who you choose to buy your electricity from, anyone can call 105.

Research by Energy Networks

Association found that 72 per cent of people don't know who to contact during a power cut, with many wrongly thinking they should call the electricity supplier they pay their bill to.

In England, Scotland and Wales, there are six Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) that operate in different geographical regions and several Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) that operate across regions. DNOs and IDNOs are each responsible for ensuring that homes and businesses have electricity 24 hours

a day, 365 days a year.

105 is just one of the ways you can contact your network operator. They can still be contacted directly by phone on their 0800 number or via their website, and most can be reached through social media too.

You can also call 105 if you spot damage to electricity power lines and substations that could put you, or someone else, in danger. If there's a serious immediate risk, call the emergency services too.

To find out more, visit: **powercut105.com**

Call 105 for free to report a power cut or if you see damage to power lines



You can RECYCLE CARD & PAPER from around your HOME



from your BATHROOM

Top tip:

- Put a **bag** or a **bin** in your bathroom just for recycling



from your BEDROOM

Top tip:

- Remember to recycle your **toiletries** and **tissue boxes**



from your KITCHEN

Top tip:

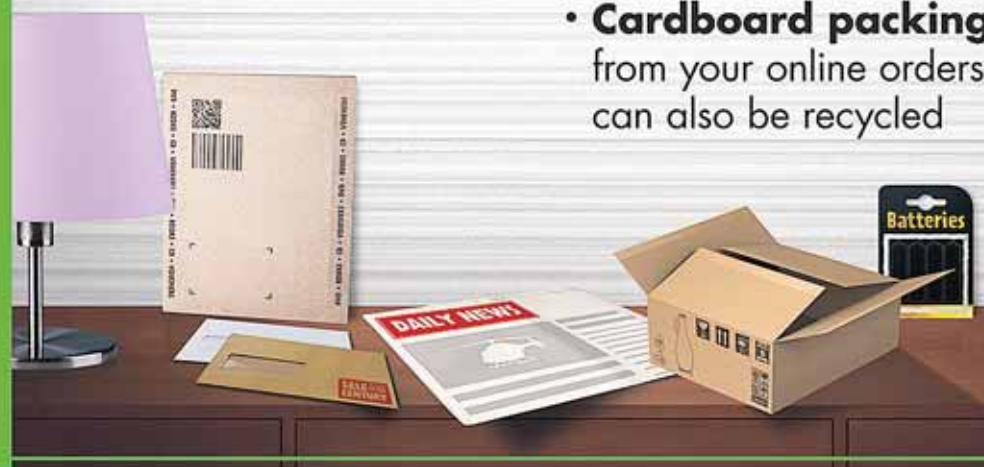
- **Flatten boxes** to save space in your recycling



from your LOUNGE

Top tip:

- **Cardboard packing** from your online orders can also be recycled



If you are unsure about any items or want to check a collection day visit www.hackney.gov.uk/recycling

